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ABSTRACT

Although early socialization and present life situation are indeed important factors to career orientation, the sex role ideology of a woman is equally if not more significant in her career motivation. Questionnaire data from 278 women aged 18 to 50 were used to examine the relative importance of early socialization, present life situation, future aspirations, values, social support, and sex role ideology for career orientation. On the basis of preferred life style, the three groups of women were designed as Career-Primary, Career-Secondary and Homemaker-Primary. A Discriminant Analysis indicated that all of the six categories of variables were significant in discriminating the three groups of women. Furthermore, it was found that Sex Role Ideology was more powerful in discriminating between groups than either of the previously researched variables of early socialization or present life situation. The results indicated that the sex role ideology of the Career-Primary group was more egalitarian or non-traditional than the other two groups, using Lipman-Blumen's (1971) Sex Role Ideology Scale. Results also yielded specific variables as possible precursors of the egalitarian Sex Role Ideology of the Career-Primary women. (Author/SE)

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ON IDEOLOGY AND ACHIEVEMENT: DETERMINANTS OF CAREER ORIENTATION AMONG AMERICAN WOMEN [1]

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Much research has already been accumulated on the determinants of career orientation in women. Some of this research has investigated those women presently involved in a career and other investigations have been concerned with those women stating that a career was one of their life goals. This dual body of research has tried to determine what variables are decisive in determining whether or not a woman chooses to have a career. The findings have been mixed; some point to early life situation variables as being significant, others find that present life situation variables yield the most significance, and still other studies find that it is a combination of both early socialization and present life situation which determines whether or not a woman will choose to have a career.

Most of this research on career-minded women has been carried out over the past 15-20 years. During this period, the Women's Movement has been revitalized and is having an impact on men, women, young and old. The Movement both reflects and portends changes in basic structures of society and the minds of individual men and women. One feminist goal is to change ideology, with the assumption that by so doing behavior will

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change. However, this is a questionable assumption until we understand whether ideology precedes career orientation in women; career orientation may be based on early socialization or current social environment. None of the previous research on career orientation has investigated the significance of sex role ideology in the career decisions of women. Furthermore, research investigating the relative importance of numerous variables to sex role ideology have not related their findings to career motivation in women (Lipmen-Blumen, 1971).

The major thrust of this research was to identify women desiring patterns of labor force participation which emphasized "career," "homemaker," or a combination of these roles. An examination of the relative importance of early socialization, current life situation, sex role ideology, values, perceived social support, and future aspirations for these various career orientations was then undertaken. The primary question asked was, "Do women of differing career orientations have different sex role ideologies or do they differ only on the previously researched variables of early socialization and present life situation?"

Questionnaire data from 278 white women, aged 18 to 50, were used in the analyses reported here. On the basis of preferred life style, three groups of women were designated as Career-Primary, Career-Secondary and Homemaker-Primary. A discriminant analysis was performed separately for each of the six major sets of items previously delineated, e.g., Early Socialization, Present Life Situation, Future Aspirations, Social Support, Sex Role Ideology and Values. The w^2 (Omega^2) statistic was then calculated for each of the six discriminant analyses. This statistic related the degree to which the sets of items were able to differentiate the

career-mindedness groups. All of the six item sets did indeed differentiate the career groups, but not equally well.

Values and Future Aspirations were most powerful in differentiating the groups. However, it should be noted at this point that both of these item sets contained questions which overlapped with the criterion career orientation question. For example, questions such as, "What do you want to be doing ten years from now?" The next most powerful item sets were Sex Role Ideology, Present Life Situation, Early Socialization, and Social Support, in that order. This supported the major thrust of the research, which was that Sex Role Ideology would differentiate the three career groups more effectively than either Present Life Situations or Early Socialization.

The results indicated that those women in the Career-Primary group generally answered that they did not try to please either parent. If we assume for a moment that the parents of these Career-Primary women gave, in Rogers' terms "unconditional positive regard," it was not necessary for them to please their parents in order to get their love and respect. It is possible to see a certain picture emerging from the early life of these Career-Primary women. First, it should be remembered that not only does the family have the responsibility of providing the child with appropriate sex models, it also provides her with her first tryout of her sex roles. Research has indicated that sex role standards are primarily concerned with teaching the child what is inappropriate for his/her sex. If Career-Primary women were less thwarted in their "tryouts" of sex-role behavior, it would explain why now they are to be found in this non-traditional, career oriented group. This also lends support to the supposition that

the reason these women took after both parents intellectually is that they were not expected to limit themselves to one role model. They were, as was previously suggested, given unconditional positive regard; they did not have to please either parent. These women saw themselves as taking after both of their parents intellectually. Thus, again they seem to have both male and female role models. Results also revealed that they either changed their religion from that of their parents or remained Jewish. Again, those that changed appear to have set up their own frame of reference or valuing system which, according to Rogers, is the natural development when one is given unconditional positive regard. For those who remained Jewish, it is possible that they had this freedom already incorporated in their liberal belief system. Thus, it may be that parental encouragement as a consistent environmental factor causes the development of personal independence to the point where decisions are made on the basis of the individual's own evaluations. Thus, the important background variables which discriminate the three groups best appear to be an underlying atmosphere within the family rather than precise demographic variables.

The Present-Life Situation of the Career-Primary women in this sample furthers our understanding of the dynamics fo career aspirations. The Career-Primary woman was young, she was not married, and she was highly educated. If she was married, she had more children than the Homemaker-Primary woman. Because of her younger age, she was probably raised in a familial and societal milieu, characterized by small family size and somewhat similar goals for girls and boys; probably there were also more egalitarian, less rigid expectations for her than for the older

women in the sample. The Career-Primary woman was apt to be living with someone rather than engaged in the traditional marital relationship. This finding in and of itself is not surprising, since previous research has found that the woman who is not married is more apt to be career oriented. What is important is the non-traditional life style situations which these women report. Some, it is true, answered merely that they were presently single, but the majority of these women stated that they were not married, but living with someone of the opposite sex. Thus, it can be said that many if not all of the Career-Primary women in the sample were living a life style which has only recently become an acknowledged option. They are living a non-traditional life style.

In terms of the Future Aspirations of the Career-Primary women, a picture emerges of a woman who not only prefers to have a career, but expects her goals to become reality in the future. Possibly it can be said that she is non-traditional since the more traditional barriers of home and family do not appear to be limiting her career expectations. A high level of education runs through the lives of these highly career oriented women. Either as an accomplishemnt or as an expectation, education appears to be the tool of the highly career oriented woman.

The data from the item set of Perceived Social Support yielded several thought-provoking results. The Career-Primary women tended to state that their mothers' expectations were congruent with what they themselves preferred and expected. It is important to note that the category of Social Support included options of perceived social support from men, and perceived social support from society in general. Thus, the results of the study indicated that for the Career-Primary woman,

what mother expects is more important than the expectations of men or the expectations of society in general. One possible explanation for this is that put forth by Lynn (1962). She hypothesized that girls are with their mothers more than they are with their fathers and thus much latent learning occurs. Boys identify with a stereotype of the masculine role because they are not with their father. Girls identify with their mother. Therefore, society does not appear to affect women except through their mothers.

Several previously cited studies indicate that it is not only whether the mother works or does not work, but how she feels about her life style which is the motivating factor toward the daughter's career aspirations. The present research did not support these results. Incorporated in the Early Socialization questions were several questions dealing with the mother's work history and her attitude toward her employment or non-employment. None of these items added a significant weight to the total discrimination of Early Socialization. Thus, what a mother <u>expects</u> appears to be more significant than the role model she portrays as far as the career aspirations of her daughter are concerned. One possible explanation for these results could be Rosenberg's (1973) suppositions concerning social roles. He states that:

> Roles are learned by intentional instruction and incidental learning. Acts are taught through the agency of other persons, and those that result not only are the actions appropriate to a situation, but reflect the other's expectations of what his acts will and should be (p. 48).

If the word "mother" is substituted for "other" in the preceding quote, it is a very reasonable explanation of the present findings.

Further support for this explanation is that since the results

indicate that the Career-Primary woman tends to be younger than the Homemaker-Primary or Career-Secondary woman, her mother is in all probability younger also. Thus, the mother's expectancies for her daughter were different than they were for mothers 20 or 35 years ago. Changing times and increasing affluence disposes toward greater permissiveness and many more reward contingencies than existed several years ago. The results a decade or so later then reflect more the consequences of such permissiveness rather than the role model set for the daughter. This seems to relate also to the results discussed previously that these daughters did not try to please either parent. Thus, possibly the permissiveness with which these younger mothers raised their daughters, rather than the actual model they presented, was a prime factor in the career orientation of the Career-Primary women. Further, it can be assumed that since these women did not have to please either parent, and expectancies were more permissive, they were free to be motivated toward the prestige and power bestowed on men in our society. Baruch (1972), in her study of mother's influences upon women's attitudes, found similar results as those reported here. She found that maternal employment was not an influence upon the daughter's attitudes toward employment. Whether a subject was favorable to such a pattern depended instead upon whether her mother endorsed it. Hartley (1964) has identified these two methods of learning one's sex role in the following manner:

> Sex-role equals those sets of related cognitions maintained by subjects for objects designated as members of the female sex. These cognitions may be first order (i.e., perceptions of what females do) or second order (attributed expectations). (p. 31)

The results presently indicate that for the behavior labeled "career

orientation" what is expected of females is more significant than what females do. Or, as Helper (1955) states, "The child comes to resemble not only the parent, but also what the parent expects the child to be." (p. 17)

(Ironically, these findings suggest that perhaps the most important vehicle for producing a more egalitatian conception of feminine roles is the most traditional of all female roles -- that of mother, because daughters tend to do what their mothers expect them to.)

The results also indicated that the Career-Primary woman was apt to obtain a higher score on Lipman-Blumen's (1971) Sex Role Ideology Scale than either of the other two groups of women. A high score on this scale represents a more egalitarian, less sex differentiated view of the marital relationship. Thus, the division of labor within the marital relationship tends to differentiate the three groups of women more effectively than any of the other sex role areas. Kinsey (1950) states that "Patterns of behavior are the products of attitudes," thus, it does not seem surprising that the women in this research who are highly career oriented tend to have egalitarian attitudes. However, what is of interest is that previously reported research such as that of Komarovsky (1946) and Wallin (1950) did not yield similar results. They found that their sample of women were experiencing conflict between attitudes and behavior. Hartley (1959) also found that her sample of working mothers were not substituting work for family obligations, but adding it to their traditional roster of family duties. The Career-Primary women in the present research do not appear to be experiencing conflict between their career behavior and their ideology; these seem

to be consistent. Furthermore, as indicated by the results of the Sex Role Ideology Scale, they are not merely adding another role to the traditional woman's role, but are ideally dividing the work of career and home in a non-sex-differentiating manner.

Komarovsky (1946), in discussing the conflicts inflicted by society on the very bright, well educated woman states, "The problems set forth in this article will persist, until the adult sex roles of women are redefined in greater harmony with the socioeconomic and ideological character of modern society." (p. 189) The present results seem to indicate that this change has possibly started to take place. The Career-Primary woman's ideologies are not in conflict with her career aspirations, which are in agreement with the character of our modern society. Building on the previously discussed results and explanations, the following picture emerges. Many social changes have taken place within the last 25 years, such as the small nuclear family, mother's finished raising children at a younger age, time necessary at home, etc. Because of these changes, patterns of differential sex role training are no longer functional to the adult roles of today. Thus, the younger respondents in the sample probably had mothers who were more in touch with the new, less sex differentiating needs of our society. As was previously discussed, this younger, Career-Primary woman tended not to have to please either parent, tended to take after both parents. She appears to have been raised in a less restrictive milieu where she came to arrive at her own valuing system. Although she did what her mother expected, what her mother expected was different from the traditional mother's expectations. Thus, the Career-Primary woman's sex role ideology is less sex differentiating allowing

for consistency between her preferences, her attitudes, and her expectations.

Lipman-Blumen (1971) found similar results in that a high score or egalitarian ideology was significantly related to high educational aspirations. The present research has taken this a step further in the life of the woman to include career aspirations.

The values of the Career-Primary women were consistent with their expectancies for a career and their preference for a career. Career-Primary women were characterized as stating that in ten years, they prefer to have a moderate to highly professional career, either with or without a family. This is of particular interest since much of the previous research reports that even women who desire a career have wife and mother as their primary goal. Ginzberg (1964) states that:

> The pattern (of men) is reversed for girls. Their primary focus is on marriage and on the type of life that they want to lead as wife and mother. They too have an interest in work, but for most of them planning for marriage and a family is central and the work problem is peripheral (p. 163).

The pattern for the Career-Primary women of this sample was in reverse of Ginzberg's observation. These women stated that their major goal was a career either with or without a family. Career-Primary women more often viewed the raising of children as undesirable and unnecessary for a well-rounded life. These highly career oriented women were stating that children are not necessary for a complete life. In fact, family appears to be peripheral and career primary. Possibly what was a woman's traditional creative activity is no longer necessary for the Career-Primary woman since they are aspiring to and choosing careers as their creative goals. Again, as in the previously discussed results,

there appears the non-traditional pattern. The Career-Primary woman appears to be stating not only a non-traditional life style, but consistent with this life style, non-traditional aspirations, ideologies, values, and preferences.

Throughout the foregoing discussion, a pattern has been seen which could be termed non-traditional. It would appear that the Career-Primary woman has not only embarked on a non-traditional life style, but that possibly the precursor to this life style was a non-traditional ideology. Possibly because of her more flexible, permissive background, there was established within her a less sex-differentiating, or egalitarian, ideology which then enabled her to embark on a career oriented life style. Thus, Sex Role Ideology in this context can possibly be seen as the career carrier.

Sherif and Sherif (1956) postulated that, "psychological processing is patterned, as jointly determined by external (stimulus) factors and by internal factors (conceptual, motivational, emotional, attitudinal, etc.)" (p. 29). This statement implies that in order to understand behavior we must be aware of both present external stimuli and the past socialization which has led to certain attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies. Sherif and Sherif further postulate, "the more unstructured the external stimulus situation, the greater the contribution of internal facotrs -- including internalized social values and standards" (p. 31). Society today is in a stage of change. When norms are changing, the external stimuli for people will be less structured and the internal ideologies and beliefs will, according to Sherif and Sherif (1956), contribute more to behavior. Thus, the category of Sex Role

Ideology was more powerful in discriminating between groups than either Early Socialization, Present Life Situation, or Social Support. The present research has supported the contention that in order to understand career motivation in women, it is vital to investigate not only early socialization and present life situation, but also sex role ideology.

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